The Orthodox Herald

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Volume 49, No. 4 ISSUE 579 **AUGUST 2000**

BABA'S HOUSES

In today's world of jumbo jets and instant electronic communication, it's difficult for us to comprehend what our parents and grandparents endured as they traveled for two weeks in the holds of ships to come to America. Many often never saw their families and homes again. My baba was only eighteen when she arrived with her two cousins from their village of Stupnitza. Although she would have liked to return, her parents and their home near the banks of a river eventually became memories.

It took eighty-five years and much red tape for another family member to make the return trip to Baba's home. Five years ago my brother accepted an invitation to visit for a family wedding.

There were many memorable events during his stay, but two stand out. The observance of the holy day of Transfiguration (August 19) coincided with his visit to Drogobych. It was a moving experience for him to witness parishioners from several churches process through the streets of this city with banners and icons (and stopping traffic!) to a host church where several hundred people participated in Divine Liturgy. My brother was especially impressed with the large number of children present. Following Liturgy, baskets of fruit were blessed and people returned to their homes for big holy day dinners. Someone asked if this was how we observed the holy day in America. Although my brother had to give a negative response, he was reminded of the big family dinners Baba used to make – good food, good company,and prepared with lots of love.

A few days later my brother and a cousin visited Stupnitza. Although the log cabin with the thatched roof no longer stands, it was, no doubt, easy to envision as Baba had described it as she remembered when it stood near the banks of the river. Returning to the site of Baba's home was, for my brother, like the completion of a circle – and an experience that brought much happiness.

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On the Feast of the Transfiguration (19 August 2000) the largest church in the Orthodox world shall be dedicated in Moscow, Russia. The Christ the Savior Cathedral dominates the skyline and is a significant symbol of Christian renewal after over 70 years of oppression. The construction is a miracle for many reasons.

First, it was built on a spot where an earlier church had stood before it was bombed by the Communists. Their intent to build the highest building in Moscow, which was to be dedicated to materialism, did not take place. An all-weather swimming pool was built instead, as the ground would not hold the intended building. Now this huge building was built and the ground holds it! The Church is **30 stories high** and is greater than the length of a football field. The entire building cover 1.68 acres. Entering the church, you have to walk 136 feet to reach the elevated area (solea) in front of the ikonastas. The size of the doors in the ikonastas are unbelievable: the royal doors are 18 feet high and 9 feet wide; while the two deacon doors are 9 feet high and 6 feet wide. These are set in a white marble ikonastas. The church has several levels. The bottom portion (basement) holds a very large parking garage, offices, chapel, library, museum, meeting halls and a residence for the Patriarch, among other things. The staff headed by a priest consists of 29 clergy and 36 ancillary people.

Secondly, we must consider it a miracle that the building was ready for services in only 4 years. Over 1000 workers were employed to work around the clock to

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THE TRANSFIGURATION

On August 6/19 we observe one of the loveliest of the Holy Days in the Church Year, namely that of the Transfiguration of Christ, which is recorded in Matt 17:1-9; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36; 2 Pet 1:17,18.

Our Lord took Peter, James and John up a mountain to pray. While He prayed His countenance was altered. His raiment became white and glistening. He was transfigured before them. Then Moses and Elijah appeared and they spoke of Jesus' forthcoming death in Jerusalem. Moses and Elijah departed. Peter said to Jesus: "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

This is a scene in which wonder and mystery are mingled. The mountain of the Transfiguration is thought to be Mount Tabor, which is about 25 miles from Nazareth. To reach the summit one goes up many hairpin curves.

At the Transfiguration, history seemed merged into the present. Moses and Elijah, who were long gone, appeared. Moses represented the Law and Elijah the prophets.

They spoke of Christ's forthcoming death. Moses had died on the top of Mount Nebo, and no one knew where he was buried. Elijah had been taken up into heaven in a chariot of fire. Wonderful indeed were the ends of the earthly lives of these great worthies!

This scene gives us something to think about when we wonder whether the saints can help us when we pray for their intercession.

But Moses and Elijah vanished, and Our Lord was left alone. The Father's Voice spoke: "This is My beloved Son; hear Him." Jesus was and is unique – the only-begotten Son of God.

It is well that the Church brings before us once a year the Transfiguration. It helps us to recognize that there is mystery in our religion. There are some things beyond our full understanding. It is good for us to recognize this fact and accept it.

Then we need from time to time to

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THE ORTHODOX HERALD
(USPS 600-140)
(ISSN 0744-1495)
Published monthly by
The Orthodox Herald, Inc.
Transjurisdictional Publication
Special non-profit rate
Entered as Periodical-Class Mail at
Hunlock Creek, PA 18621 and Mahanoy
City, PA 17948 an additional mailing office.
Founders and Editors: V. Rev. W. Basil
Stroyen, M.A., Ph.D., D.D. and Nina Bohush
Stroyen, R.N., D.D., D. Litt
Phone 570-256-7232
Annual Subscription $7.00 a year.
$12.00 for two years.
Packet Plan Rate on Request
Address all correspondence to:
P.O. Box 9
Hunlock Creek, PA 18621-0009
Contributions are tax deductible
Published since 1952



AUGUST 2000

DIED: Pani Matka Julia Lawyrk in Minneapolis. She lived in Johnson City, NY.

INSURANCE COMPANIES IN ENGLAND will not insure church artifacts unless they are adequately protected. Thieves steal 28 million pounds worth of chalices, lecterns and pulpits a year. These are sold through the Internet in Europe, the U.S. and Japan. Last year there were 462 attacks on clergy. Delegates at a Church watch conference in Liverpool (England) were told that CCTV cameras and pager systems are being increasingly used to help combat these situations.

THE STANDING CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS (SCOBA), at its fall meeting in October, will release a Study Guide so that 1500 Orthodox parishes in America may incorporate this work into their Religious Education programs. A historic conference will be held on May 1-3, 2001 in Washington, DC which will be a National Conference of all Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America.

YOU HAVE HEARD OF THE CRYSTAL CATHEDRAL IN CALIFORNIA but did you know anything about the Orthodox glass church in Pittsburgh? This is Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, 302 West North Ave. in Pittsburgh, three blocks away from Three Rivers Stadium. The church was consecrated in 1961 and reflected Pittsburgh's status as a leading aluminum and glass-manufacturing center. The church parish is now deciding whether to do extensive needed repairs on the building or move.

SYNDEMOS, the World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth, has a full schedule of events. Some are Russian Youth Exchange in Moscow - Sept. 2-10, Ukraine Youth Leadership in Uzhgorod - Sept. 6-16, Bulgarian Leadership in Sofia - Sept. 30-Oct. 8 and in New Wellington, New Zealand - mid-January 2001. Call 212-570-3534 for info.

VISIT THE HERMITAGE in St. Petersburg, Russia on Internet - www.hermitagemuseum.org.

INTERFAITH MARRIAGE WEB SITE: http://interfaithgoarch.org

CZAR NICHOLAS II and his family will be canonized this month at the Jubilee Council of Bishops in Moscow. They will be recognized as strastoterptsy, or passion bearers for the humble Christian way they faced their imprisonment and death. They have already been recognized as saints by the Church Outside of Russia.

GREEK ORTHODOX in Athens are protesting a plan to remove a citizen's religious affiliation from new identity cards, which are to be issued to replace an older issue.

WHEN CLINTON VISITED MOSCOW in June, he visited Christ the Saviour Cathedral, which is being built on the spot where Tsar Alexander II ordered an original cathedral to be built as thanks for Russia's victory over Napolean in 1812. This was destroyed by Stalin and an outdoor swimming pool was built on the spot. Clinton told reporters "That was amazing" after the tour, to which reporters and photographers were not allowed.

Four CD's to a set of Akafist singers for $40 - no S/H or single CD at $15 - no S/H charges. This male chorus is absolutely unequaled in chamber music renditions in church Slavonic.

BILLBOARDS IN CLEVELAND area are getting attention. Some of the messages are: "Let's meet at my house Sunday before the game. – God." Another reads: "Loved the wedding, invite me to the marriage. – God." Another reads: "You think it's hot here? – God"

A MESSAGE FOR EVERYDAY is recorded on cassette for every week and is available from DoveWorld Communications, 140 Horseheads Blvd., Elmira, NY 14903 or call (607) 767-0766. These cassettes produced by Fr. Jason Kappanadze may be ordered in bulk for 71 cents per tape. Individual subscription is $4 a month postage paid.

IRR/TV, founded by Hanna Haukka, a Canadian minister, has opened a Moscow training center to teach Christians to produce radio and television broadcasts on 50 channels. He said: "Isolation makes Siberia one of the most spiritually desolate places in Russia. Poverty, spiritual oppression, and extended periods of winter darkness cause depression, alcoholism, and suicide... There is great spiritual hunger."

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN PORTUGAL, SPAIN AND BRAZIL is under the care of the Polish Orthodox Church. A large cathedral was consecrated early this year 90 miles north of Lisbon in Portugal, not far from Fatima. The Protection of the Theotokos church was 23 years in planning and 7 years in building, mostly by volunteer workers. It is very large with galleries and can contain 10,000 worshippers. The concrete building is located on monastery grounds, which has olive groves and orchards as well as a smaller church. An orphanage with 125 children, a school, a residence for the Metropolitan and other buildings complete the complex.

ARCHBISHOP CHRISTODOULOS OF ATHENS, the leader of the Orthodox Church in Greece, voices opinions on secular issues of the day. Among these he accuses President Clinton of having "bloodied hands" because of NATO's 1999 bombing in the Balkans. He has condemned the frivolity of St. Valentine's Day saying: "We Orthodox Greeks have no reason to adopt foreign models when we have our own Christian examples." For those wishing to celebrate their love, he suggested that St. Valentine's Day be replaced by the Feast day of St. Hyakinthos on July 3. He also attacked "mediums" and fortune tellers, saying they performed "devil's tricks that distance people from God."

•Baba's Houses

Our parents and grandparents came to America with few belongings. The clothes on their backs, perhaps a prayer book, and a small trunk which held all the rest of their worldly possessions gave them a humble start. What they've left us, though, are precious legacies – our Faith, a sense of family and much more. Through their sacrifices came our blessings.

Baba never returned to her home and family in Stuponitza; instead, she made a new home here in America with Gedo and their children – a home which, by the way, still stands near the banks of a river.

Margaret Pysarchyk

•Christ the Savior Cathedral

construct this cathedral as a powerful witness to the existence of God. Not only was the construction finished but many icons are in place. The largest icon is 49 feet long and is located 231 feet above ground level.

Thirdly, there is room for 10,000 worshippers. This is unusual in Orthodox churches, which tend to be smaller buildings. The building dominates the skyline of Moscow and is located in the heart of Moscow. It is commonly referred to as "the now old" look of downtown Moscow. The church has elevators which were donated by Otis Co. in the U.S. President Clinton recently rode up to the walkway for a bird's eye view of the interior of the cathedral and of Moscow.

The original cathedral took over 44 years to build. It commemorated the Victory over Napoleon in 1812. When it was dedicated in 1883, multiple canons were fired giving Tchaikovsky the idea for the canons in his Overture of 1812. Another point of history. A popular song "Skazhi ka Djadja," which is still sung by many male choruses, was written in honor of General Kutuzov, who was a hero of the War of 1812's final battle in a village about 70 miles west of Moscow, Borodino.

This symbol of rebirth was built using the plans of Ton, the original architect. Since the detailed schemas of the original cathedral were available, the present building followed them as much as practical. Even the icons, which will cover 12,000 square yards of wall and ceiling, will follow the ones in the original cathedral.

This cathedral is huge and is beautiful – may it's magnificence inspire worshippers to send up prayers to God, Christ, His Mother and the saints!

Ceremonies will be carried on the Internet.

•The Transfiguration

behold Christ in His beauty. We do not have to be always interpreting or trying to explain. It is valuable sometimes to think of Him and rest in His Presence. Many of our "pioneers in Orthodoxy" had this outlook and were able to build and maintain churches with their meagre incomes and their desire to see His Transfiguration put church attendance above everything else.

We cannot stay always on the Mount of Transfiguration. We have to go back down to the valley of human need and of everyday life, but we need from time to time to catch the vision of the mountain that we may live with greater inspiration in the valley.

THE AUGUST HOLY DAYS IN PRAYER

Three feasts of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ are commemorated during the month of August. Two of the feasts fall during a two-week fast commonly called "Spasa," while the other during the post-festive time of the Dormition (Falling Asleep) of the Birth-giver of God. Use these prayers to reflect on the meaning of each feast in your life.

August 1/14 - Feast of the Procession of the Honorable and Life-Giving Cross

Romans 8: 14-21 Luke 8: 16-21

We fall down before You on this feast of the Procession of Your most-holy and life-giving Cross, O Savior, and recall all that You have accomplished for the sake of our salvation. Once an instrument of shame and death, now, the Cross brought salvation into all the whole world. Therefore, Your Church joyfully raises it on high for the faithful to venerate! With humble and contrite hearts, we ask You to forgive all our sins both voluntary and involuntary; we pray to You, O Lord: Hear us and have mercy.

O Christ our God, as Your Church gathers on this day to honor Your holy, precious and life-giving Cross, strengthen us in the ascetical efforts of this short penitential season, and grant us courage to be faithful to Your life-giving commandments; we pray to You, O Lord: Hear us and have mercy.

August 6/19 - Transfiguration of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

2 Peter 1: 10-19 Matthew 17: 1-9

O only-begotten Son of the eternal Father: You revealed Your glory to Your disciples on Mount Tabor and made them eyewitnesses of Your greatness. May we advance from glory to glory, and be made worthy to behold Your radiance in the never-ending day of Your Kingdom; we pray to You, O Lord: Hear us and have mercy.

Since You have accounted us worthy to stand before Your holy altar to worship You, O God, it is good for us to be here! May we listen attentively to the voice of the Father calling us to a life of holiness, so that, we may become beloved sons and daughters of the Most High; we pray to You, O Lord: Hear us and have mercy.

August 16/28 - Icon of our Lord "Not Made With Hands"

1 Timothy 3: 13- 4: 5 Luke 9: 51-56, 10: 22-24, 13:22

O eternal God, full of glory and majesty: You said through the voice of the prophet Moses, "you cannot see My Face; for man shall not see Me and live." Yet, because of Your tender love for our kind, You sent down Your only-begotten Son into the world by taking flesh from the most-pure Virgin and became man. Therefore, when we see You, we see the Father. Let the warmth and splendor of Your light shine upon us, so that, the peace that surpasses all understanding may dwell within our hearts, both in this life and in the age to come; we pray to You, O Lord: Hear us and have mercy.

In the previous feast of the Transfiguration, O Christ our true God, You made Your countenance shine like the sun; in today's feast, we are joyful because You left us an imprint of Your adorable and life-giving Face for all to see, touch and meditate upon. Grant us the grace to receive You with open hearts, so that, You will come and make Your dwelling among us; we pray to You, O Lord: Hear us and have mercy.

Raymond J. Mastroberte
Iconographer

* * * * * *

At one time strewing herbs and fragrant grasses underfoot was an accepted part of arrangements for great Holy Days. Herbs such as lavender and rosemary and leaves from the linden tree were often used for strewing as they produced a pleasant aroma when crushed. Entering a church building when the floor was strewn with these aromatic greens gave a special meaning to the great day celebrated.

EMBROIDERED CLOTHS

For many years it was hard to find embroidered articles in the U.S. Some were lucky enough to get an embroidered article from a friend or relative as a gift. Even those women who knew how to embroider became too busy working to spend the hours one piece required. It was also very difficult to get patterns for the counted embroidery. Those who did embroider went to the stamped pieces. Slowly, but surely, one of the folk arts of the Carpathian area was in danger of being lost.

Despite the adversities that the Carpathian area experienced throughout its history, down to the present, when its territory has been divided into three parts, the people have retained some of their individuality and unique traditions. They have retained many of their folk arts and, historically, the embroidery was the most widely practiced and was the most popular. The people expressed their unique sense of beauty through their embroidery.

Embroidery has a rich history developing into designs of sheer beauty. These designs vary from region to region. Travel was difficult and designs were built around similar traditions. Those knowledgeable can look at a piece of embroidery and tell you what region it came from.

Most of us have only seen embroidered shirts and blouses and perhaps a doily or so. But embroidered items played a great part in the Carpathian life. For example, a long, hand-woven cloth, embroidered on both ends and called a rushnyk, it was very evident in a person's life. "A baby was gently wiped dry with an embroidered rushnyk. At a wedding, the couple was greeted with a rushnyk spread over a platter which contained a loaf of bread. Guests were greeted in the same way. And when death came they were used to cover the plain wooden coffin. They were very visible over the icons in churches and homes.

There are museums of embroidery items. One of the finest we have seen is in the Uzhorod Castle in Ukraine. We were struck by the beauty of the rushnyks and coveted at least one for our icon corner. We spoke to women in a village we were visiting and they agreed to make some. We recently received 12. I will take one for my icon but it is difficult to choose. They are all so beautiful. I can't be greedy and must share with those who have also been looking for a rushnyk. Until they are gone, these approximately 12 by 60 inch cloths, with about 12 inches of embroidery at each end and a finished edge, can be had for $50, no other charges. The prominent colors are black and red.

A few Pascha – Easter embroidery covers – are available at $30 - no S/H charges.

PRAYER ROPES

We see more and more laypeople with prayer ropes fastened to their wrists. This usually causes raised eyebrows, as these ropes are usually given to a person as part of the ceremony when they become a monk or nun. They are considered spiritual swords, helping them to conquer absentmindedness while at prayer and to drive away evil thoughts from their souls.

The prayer rope may appeal to laypeople for the same reasons. Another reason may be that it remotely resembles a rosary used in the Western Church. However, the rosary originated at a much later date. The custom of reciting prayers upon a string or cord with knots at regular intervals has been practiced from the early days of Christianity. It originated among monks and especially hermits who used a piece of heavy cord with knots tied at intervals to keep track of their shorter prayers and their prostrations. Even earlier some used small stones in a double bag, switching the stones from bag to bag as they completed a prayer. It is clear why prayer ropes took over.

The prayer rope is called a Vervitsa in Old Slavonic or Chotki by the Slavic people. It has 103 knots or beads divided into four parts by four larger knots or beads into a rope looking like this: One large knot, 17 small, the second large knot followed by 33 small knots, then the third large knot followed by 40 small knots, the fourth large knot then 12 small ones. A small knot is added at the end.

The Greek monks call the prayer rope komboskinion. It differs from the Slav one. It has 100 knots divided into four equal parts by four large beads. It has four additional knots in a pendant adorned with a small cross-shaped tassel.

The prayers said with the prayer rope differ in the two traditions. Laypeople tell us that they say the Jesus prayer while using the rope. "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me a sinner."

* * * * * *

Maturity begins when we are content to feel we are right sometimes, without feeling the necessity to prove someone else wrong.

Dabs of Thoughts

Canonization, meaning "cataloging" the saint. In the earliest times the Church recognized the martyrdom of one of its members by immediately venerating him. They lived among them and proved their faith by often being martyred in front of everyone. There was then no reason for any investigation for proof of their sainthood.

Icons aren't decorations but a reflection that God became man. They are holy doors and windows.

There is a story that St. Andrei Rublev was in the habit of sitting before old masterpieces and studying them intently on feasts and holidays. His example should be followed by modern man, who has been deprived by cinema and TV of his ability to really look at works of art and study them properly. A quick glance at an icon does not help towards an understanding of early Russian art. To penetrate the structural complexity of its images, to reach the core, requires much time and attention. Then, and only then, despite radical differences in world outlook, can the modern man taste that supreme joy which the inspiration and the skill of early Russian artists are able to give. (M V Alpaatov)

Preaching connotes good; preachy connotes bad.

Passion bearer (strastoterptsy) is a special category of Orthodox sainthood, applied to those who, strictly speaking, were not martyrs, because martyrdom requires that the martyr made a choice between rejecting Christ and dying for Him. Passion bearers are instead revered for the humble way in which they met imminent death. For example, Saints Boris and Gleb, Russia's first saints, were canonized as passion bearers in 1015 because they did not fight their cousins who conspired to kill them over the Kiev throne.

The ikonoatasis is the altar screen, the division between the worlds, the frontier of visible and invisible.

Canon law has ecclesiological foundations. The canons of the Orthodox Church have never been codified.

St. Gregory the Theologian says: "It is a good thing to speak of God but better still to purify oneself for God."



EDITORS' NOTES

It is only one month before religious education classes resume in most parishes. There is no more important "ministry" in the Church than that of being a religious education teacher. The forming of people in their faith and helping them to know Christ better is the goal. But in too many parishes, religious education seems to be an afterthought. The teachers feel that their teachings stops once they leave the classroom. But they should plan more like one day retreats and encourage questions, and plan intergenerational programs that encourage family members to share the faith directly with the children. The classes should not start until the teachers are blessed to teach in a formal ceremony.

You are either an agent of change or a victim of change. No Orthodox has been immunized against error or sin, that is why the Sacrament of Confession and Penance was instituted. Every faithful and qualified member of the Church has an obligation to protect the traditions of the Church. When this is not possible, many seek satisfaction elsewhere. Unfortunately, many elderly people, not always in the best of health, who were once leaders and workers in their parish, call us asking where they can appeal to discuss changes in their parish which differ from what they were taught and practiced for over a century. "If it was right, why is it wrong now" is the phrase we hear too often. Their church is failing them now when they need it the most.

The problem is that as sobornost has broken down, there is no "chain of command." Priests and laymen alike are finding it very difficult to get advice or even to "keep the faith."

Diocesan meetings are scheduled to be held in the next few months. These meetings must be open to an exchange of ideas and not just pro-forma, which may produce meetings that are praised as peaceful but, in reality, has rigor mortis set in?

Our tour should be leaving next month for the area where most of the ancestors of the present Orthodox in northeast and midwest USA came from. Most of the organizers of parishes in these areas came from the Carpathian area and not Great Russia. Those in the Pacific came from Great Russia. Until the early 1950s, parishes were unofficially classified as either Uhorski, Galician, Belorus or Ruske. Priests were assigned to parishes according to these categories. It wasn't until the 60s that it was more important whether a priest spoke English than from which section of the Old Country he or his parents came. During this transition, lucky was the priest who had an English speaking wife. As parishes had origins in different areas of Europe, traditions and customs varied. These were fought for and kept for many generations. The question of many is why are they wrong, why can't they be discussed and respected?

There are many Holy Days in August. Make sure your children are in church. Don't take a vacation from God.

The Stroyens

WINTER'S GRACE

Though many profess to hear the voice of God, the actions of some seem in direct conflict with what we imagine a kind and merciful God would say. How do we know what God is saying? How can we be sure that the voice we hear is God's voice?

In general God's voice calls us to life, even if we may have to take painful steps to find that life. God's voice whispers in the heart, repeatedly. In order to hear that Voice, we must listen with our whole being, paying careful attention to the insights of trusted friends, of the community, of the Church as well as to the scriptural Word.

Listening becomes an act of worship, a posture of surrendering to God as we allow the Word to sound in us. One excellent way to achieve this is by the repetition of the Jesus Prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God have mercy on me a sinner." Say this slowly, then pause, then repeat. Do not hurry. This gives us the opportunity to embrace all that we have heard about the Word, so that we become one with it.

FUNDS

ALASKA: Chaplain Col. John Steffero, Laura Smakula

MISSION: Martha Bortnick, Shirley Sass, Tamara Faight

BOTH ALASKA AND MISSION FUNDS: Anonymous, Theodore Demchak, Teresa Potopchuk, Ethel Watlock, George Sebastian in memory of his mother Maria Yakovlava. Nita Harris Siciliano in memory of her father Harry P. Harris and godfather Adam Szabiet.



KITCHEN CORNER

We were served the most refreshing cold soup at the Michalov's dacha many years ago. Recently my niece, who has a boat, asked me if I had any suggestions for something different that could be put together in her tiny on-board galley. What better than Okroshka for a somewhat exotic and delicious dish? This recipe for Okroshka (a Russian style Cold Beet Soup) was given me by Boris and Lilly Gontcharenko. You don't need a boat to enjoy this soup.

OKROSHKA

1 pkg. radishes (about 20)
3 large cucumbers
2 cans whole beets, with juice
1 bunch scallions (green tops only, thinly sliced)
1/4 C. fresh dill or 2 Tbsp.l dill weed
2 qts. boiled water that has been cooled
6 hard-boiled eggs, coarsely chopped
5-6 Tbsp. sugar (according to taste)
2 Tbsp. salt (according to taste)
1/2 tsp. black pepper
2-3 tsp. hot mustard
8 oz. container sour cream
1 tsp. granulated sour salt or 3 grains *see below

Grate by hand or coarsely chop in food processor the radishes, cucumbers and beets. In large bowl, add the veggies and the thinly sliced scallions, chopped dill, chopped eggs and other ingredients. Pour in beet juice and the cooled boiled water. Add the sour cream and mix until well blended. Float some ice cubes on top. Soup should be very cold, tangy but a little sweet.

*Start with 1/2 tsp. sour salt as soup should not be too tart.

For smaller portions of soup, use 1 qt. water, 1 can beets, and divide other ingredients in half.

* * * * * *

You cannot change the past but you can ruin a perfectly good present by worrying about the future.

THE ORTHODOX HERALD
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The Orthodox Herald
Fr. Stroyen, Ph.D., Editor
P.O. Box 9
Hunlock Creek, PA 18621

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"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15

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THE BABAS TAUGHT ME

We were on our way home from Divine Liturgy when Baba said: "I've lived too long on this earth." I was startled and asked why she talked this way. She answered: "I didn't think that I would ever live so long as to see what disrespect there is in the house of God."

She went on to say that when she came to church, she wanted to say her entrance prayers. Two women behind her were whispering so loud she couldn't concentrate. She said: "I could be less interested in Mrs. Smikda's daughter-in-law's infertility problems."

She then continued becoming more agitated because people don't respect the Body and Blood of Our Lord. They all go up to receive Holy Communion and whisper all the way up to the chalice. Worse are those who seem to have forgotten that Christ's Body is in their midst. They settle into their pews after taking communion. Instead of praying, they start to whisper and discuss the people who are going up to communion. Talk, talk, talk.

Have people forgotten that the Church is a holy place? They act as if it is a community center where they greet people and tell them everything about their lives.

Baba said: "You know that I have complained to the Church Board. They and the priest have tried to stop the talking, but those who are doing it are offended by it being brought to their attention."

How can we expect children to be quiet when the elders are so noisy and disrespectful?

Home Bible Reading Schedule

AUGUST 2000

1	Matt 14:1-13	17	Luke 20:
2	Matt 14:35-15:11	18	Matt 21:12-14, 17-20
3	Matt 15:12-21	19	Matt 15:32-39
4	Matt 15:29-31	20	**Matt 14:22-34**
5	Matt 10:37-11:1	21	Matt 21:
6	**Matt 17:1-9**	22	Matt 21:
7	Matt 16:1-6	23	Matt 21:
8	Matt 16:6-12	24	Matt 21:
9	Matt 16:20-24	25	Matt 22:23-33
10	Matt 16:24-28	26	Matt 17:24-18:4
11	Matt 17:10-18	27	**Matt 17:14-23**
12	Matt 12:30-37	28	Matt 23:13-22
13	**Matt 14:14-22**	29	Mark 6:14-30
14	Matt 18:1-11	30	Matt 23:29-39
15	Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28	31	Matt 24:13-28
16	Luke 20:		

SAINTS CALENDAR
ST. JOHN

On Aug. 29/Sept. 11, we shall be celebrating a Feast that requires a fast. We shall be commemorating the Beheading of the Holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptizer John. That is the glorious title that the Church has given him in recognition of the special place he has in the assembly of Saints.

He is a prophet because he spoke the words God gave him to speak. He did so with courage and authority. Many heard him and their souls were stirred to repent, that is to turn their lives around – to follow the laws of God rather than merely obeying their own will and desires. That is what living in the Kingdom of God is: acknowledging His laws and aspiring to live by them. These are the laws of love. They are comprised of things such as justice, truth, kindness and mercy.

John is also called the Forerunner because he preceded Christ in His ministry. The Prophet Malachi foretold his coming, calling him Elijah (Malachi 4:5), which Jesus confirmed (Matthew 11:14). John did not only prepare the way for Christ to come, preach, teach and work wonders liberating people from sin, sickness and death in **this** world of time and space. He also preceded Him to the place where the souls of the departed awaited the liberation brought by the coming of the victorious Victim, Whose blood shed upon the Cross forever broke the chains of sin and death.

John died at the hands of Herod's soldiers, when Herod tragically gave way to the temptation of pride and vanity (he gave the order to kill him only because he did not want to lose face before his guests when Salome, coached by her mother, Herodias, asked for John's head on a plate as a reward for her dance). Thus John's righteous soul, too, went to that mysterious place, which was soon to be filled with light at the coming of the Glorious Lamb, Jesus, slain for us. And he announced that coming to all the souls awaiting this joyous event.

Thus we celebrate John, who baptized Christ, initiating Him into the ministry He fulfilled for all the universe. Celebrating, we ask to be filled with the same Spirit that moved him to be the Lion of God that he was (it is this likeness that gives the Gospel of Mark its symbol – since Mark begins his account with the preaching of John). And we recall that this Lion was led by the Lamb. So may **we** all be today and forever.

Fr. Ihor Kutash, Ph.D.

PRESS FUND

Thank you/spasebo for not forgetting us during these hot, muggy days.Our costs continue year 'round because we publish year 'round. We do not take a vacation from God in the summer. He is always there for us and we thank and worship Him. Helping us this month are: Mary Kochmaruk, Anonymous, Fr. **Stephen Kachur**, Teresa Potopchuk, Nina Nestor, **Eugenia Skuby, Katherine Shaffchick, Andrew Popovchak,** Paul Laskovich, Margaret Balog, Theodore Demchak, E. Souchick, Helen Durniak, Anne Dorozynski, Anna Palceski, Ethel Watlock, Nikolaj Karpowitsch, Cyril Wadzita, Mr. and Mrs. John Phillips.

Father and Matushka Stroyen in praise for the graduation from high school of Tatyana Bohush and acceptance into Mansfield University and graduation from college of Laura Soloman-Bohush and her acceptance into grad school and graduation of Timothy Seigfreid from high school. We don't know what we would do without his cheerful help. Robert and Dorothy Koncel in memory of Walter (Harry) Fedorko. Julia Galit Candles in memory of all deceased family members. **Matushka Claudia Virosteck** in memory of Fr. Deacon George Virosteck of Broadview Heights, OH who died on Feb. 8. He served in St. Michael's Church.